

"Joy in the Midst of Spiritual Growth"
Philippians 3:12-21

Three principles of spiritual growth:

1. It is not automatic

"You have been Christians a long time now, and you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things a beginner must learn about the Scriptures. You are like babies who drink only milk and cannot eat solid food. And a person who is living on milk isn't very far along in the Christian life and doesn't know much about doing what is right."
Hebrews 5:12, 13

2. It is ongoing
3. It is not about "how many"

Paul's pattern for spiritual growth:

1. Evaluation: Face my faults

"Therefore, let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." 1 Corinthians 10:12

"You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you." Proverbs 28:13

2. Elimination: Forget the former; let go of your past.

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing!" Isaiah 43:18, 19

Two things you need to forget:

1. Your failures

"By the death of Christ, we are set free." Ephesians 1:7

"He has canceled every record of the debt we owed. Christ has done away with it by nailing it to the cross." Colossians 2:14

"There is no condemnation awaiting those who belong to Christ." Romans 8:1

"This is how we know that we belong to the truth, how we set our hearts at rest in His presence. Whenever our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and He knows everything." 1 John 3:19-20

2. Your successes

"Anyone who starts to plow and then keeps looking back is of no use for the Kingdom of God." Luke 9:62

3. Concentration: Focus on the future

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to win the prize." 1 Corinthians 9:24

4. Determination: Fight to the finish

"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." 2 Corinthians 4:8, 9

"But I reckon my own life to be worth nothing to me, in order that I may complete my mission and finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do, which is to declare the Good News of the grace of God." Acts 20:24

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:7, 8

"Let us not grow weary in doing good. For at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9

"Be confident of this very thing. That He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion unto the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6